G-5's "Eye on AMC"

U.S. Army Materiel Command

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New explosive analysis technology now in theater

Military and civilian ammunition specialists are training on two state-of-the-art battlefield devices to analyze Army explosive material for ordnance workers in Southwest Asia.

The Defense Ammunition Center at McAlester, Okla., developed the test units, with its partners, the Army Research, Development and Engineering Command and Geo-Centers, Inc., which provides another safety net to ammunition workers deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait, said Jim Medley, a quality assurance specialist, deployed to Camp Arifjan from the headquarters.

"Instead of having to pull samples, send them back to labs in the states, and wait for the results, which can take up to six weeks, we know in a matter of just a few minutes whether the explosive stabilizer in our munitions meet safety requirements," Medley said.

The other unit operating in theater scans explosive material and determines the type of explosive by analyzing the "light spectrum foot print" of the chemicals within the explosive, Medley said. A probe is placed on the test material. "It will tell you if the material is explosive or not, and what kind, such as TNT or RDX," he said.

The field units are designed to test all Army and Coalition Forces munitions, identify old Iraqi munitions and assist ordnance disposal professionals to determine explosive hazards through the Army Materiel Command's Army Forward Support Brigade-Southwest Asia.

Chemical weapons incineration progressing in Alabama

Local angst over the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility, Ala., has eased as the burning of 2,254 tons of chemical agent proceeds safely.

Since the first sarin nerve agent-filled M55 rocket was safely destroyed two years ago, the facility has processed about 80 percent of the munitions containing sarin housed at the facility, said Mike Abrams, public affairs officer for the Anniston Chemical Activity and ACADF.

Sarin nerve agent, or GB, makes up about 19 percent of the total agent Anniston is charged with processing. The M55 rockets that were first destroyed measured 78 inches, weighed 57 pounds and contained nearly one and a half gallons of nerve agent each.

To date, the facility, operated by Westinghouse Anniston, a subsidiary of Washington Demilitarization Company, has destroyed nearly all of the GB-filled munitions.

Only 105 mm artillery shells are still to be destroyed. The facility recently began processing those shells, which measure 15 inches long, weigh 32 pounds and contain roughly a fifth of a gallon of GB nerve agent.

Did you know …

The U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command - Rock Island recently announced that its HMMWV armor contracting team has won a prestigious award for procuring parts used in the life-saving protective armor kits in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Armor Survivability Kit Material Central Procurement Team, made up of employees from TACOM LCMC and the Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center, received the Army Materiel Command Outstanding Integrated Product/Weapon Team of the Year Award for 2004. The purpose of the award is to give special recognition to a team for contributions of outstanding significance to the command and the Army, during the previous year.